29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

guide and asked, "Who is this woman, and why does she follow us?" "It's only Snow-Knife's wife," he answered. "She is coming with us to visit her two sisters. Don't trouble about her. She will stay with me throughout our journey, and in the meantime my wife will live with Snow-Knife."

Marriage here was evidently not the institution we are taught to reverence. This woman had openly traded husbands for a few days in order to visit her relatives; and there were times when men seemed to exchange wives without even that excuse. I had read of the custom in books, but its impression was different when it occurred before my own eyes without the least attempt at concealment. It became more intelligible later, with fuller knowledge of their domestic life. The people were not really immoral, for they were doing no wrong according to the standards of life handed down to them through countless generations; and the transfer of wedlock was not made indiscriminately, but according to definite regulations. A man often had wives in half a dozen different tribes, some of whom he saw only once in his lifetime; and the wives had other husbands. But their children were all his children, forbidden to marry one another; and if ever he visited the tribe to which one of his wives belonged he received a cordial welcome, and was free to hunt and seal in its territory like the regular members of the community. A stranger in an Eskimo tribe

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

837 A stranger in an Eskimo tribe
609 was a potential enemy who could be killed at sight;
628 but by this system of temporarily exchanging wives the natives could travel in safety from one end of the country to the other.

114 So Mrs. Snow-Knife, or Mrs. Wealthy, as she now became for a few days, accompanied us to the village of the "People of the Land on the Other Side." She arranged the skins and meagre furniture of our snow-huts, tended the lamp, and boiled the seal meat for our
574 evening meal. I witnessed her meeting with her two
593 sisters, one much older than herself, the other a maiden of about fifteen years. She herself rejoiced without effusion; the maiden displayed more interest in the white man's sled than in the sister of whom she had heard nothing for nine months; but the eldest woman sat in her hut and wept copiously throughout the evening. They were typically human in their outlooks, these three sisters dwelling where the midday twilight and the midnight sun follow each other season after season. The young girl was just beginning life and her hopes were all in the future; Mrs. Snow-Knife had been married several years and held both the past and the future in an equal balance; but the eldest woman, though still in the prime of life, bore the stamp of hardship on her face and her mind was already looking backward.

574 The "People of the Land on the Other Side" were
535 too hospitable not to hold the usual dance in our

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

low; but the hills are brown and barren, or sparsely clothed with a few creeping plants such as dryads, saxifrages, and oxytropi.

On this peninsula I planned to live six months, isolated with my little band of Eskimos. The life on the ice was ended; fishing and caribou-hunting were to be our sole pursuits. As Ikpuck's adopted son I could observe all the details of Eskimo summer life, following its variations from day to day as no traveller had done before me. It was for this purpose, indeed, that I had cut myself adrift from the rest of the expedition until the winter, when the strait would freeze over again and allow me to return to Bernard Harbour. In the back of my mind lay also another plan. Sixty miles to the northward was Prince Albert Sound, the home of an Eskimo tribe that I had not yet visited. Each summer a few of the Sound people met and traded with Eskimos from Dolphin and Union Strait somewhere in the interior of Wollaston Land, and Ikpuck, who was born in this region, promised to guide our party to their usual places of rendezvous. He arranged that we should travel first to the Lake of Dancing within the Colville Hills; later, if necessary, to the Big Lake across the divide or to Prince Albert Sound itself.

We had landed near Okowyarvik Creek, which flows into a long, narrow harbour sheltered from every gale by an island that extends across its mouth. It was the

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

CHAPTER VIII

BREAD FROM THE WATERS

OUR meeting with the Tormiat from the Great Sound fulfilled one of the purposes for which I had shaken off civilization and adopted the Eskimo life. It is true that we encountered but two families, and those for four days only; but in customs and language they so closely resembled the natives with whom I was travelling that it was unnecessary to visit the remainder of the tribe. My companions had welcomed the journey as a pleasant break in the routine of their daily life. Now that it was ended they resumed their regular duty at this season, the drying and storing away of fish for the barren months of early winter.

The long Arctic spring was drawing to its close.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

nourished Icehouse wriggled in her bag for several minutes before she tumbled, like an enormous chrysalis, head foremost onto the floor.

We occupied a real snow-hut at the Lake of Dancing, one that had been erected by our companions a week or more before. Here we dismantled our caches of dried meat and dried fish, and recovered my sled, the big spring tent, and all the other things we had deposited at this place in the early days of summer. Foxes, worming their way through sundry chinks and crevices in the stones, had destroyed all the sinew fishing-lines; fortunately we had plenty of cod-line that could take its place. More serious was the destruction of the white-bellied caribou hides from which Icehouse had intended to make some finely ornamented costumes for the winter dances; but I assuaged her grief by promising to purchase other hides for her when the tribes reassembled at the sealing-grounds. We sighted one of the marauding foxes near our camp, and lured it within range by squeaking like a young bird; but Ikpuck's bullet struck only the ground between its legs, and, though deluged with snow, it escaped without injury.

After fishing in various lakes for a few days with little success we overtook our companions at the source of a creek that flows into Dryad Harbour. They had abandoned all further hunting and fishing on the land under the pressure of colder weather and were return-